

CLAIMS

1. Process for access to multimedia elements stored by means of digital data, an image (a, b, c, d, e, ..., m, n) being associated with each element so as to control access to the latter, characterized in that, when one wishes to access one of these elements,

- a first group of images (b, c, e, f, g; a, j, e, f, g) associated with first elements is displayed, and

- means for displaying a second group of images (i, e, k, m, n; b, c, e, k, m) associated with second elements, which group is distinct from the first group of images, are associated with at least one of these displayed images (e).

2. Process according to Claim 1, characterized in that means for displaying a third group of images associated with third elements, which group is distinct from the second group of images, are associated with at least one of the images of the second group of images (i, e, k, m, n; b, c, e, k, m).

3. Process according to Claim 1 or 2, characterized in that a first group of images is displayed automatically as soon as means for displaying images are activated.

4. Process according to Claim 1, 2 or 3, characterized in that, when an operation is performed on a multimedia element such as the display thereof, the storage thereof or the transmission thereof, means activating the display of a first group of images (b, c, e, f, g; a, j, e, f, g) are displayed.

5. Process according to Claim 1, 2, 3 or 4, characterized in that, when a group of images is displayed, means controlling operations, such as a modification, a storage or a transmission, are also displayed.

6. Process according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the number of images displayed is less than ten, preferably less than six.

7. Process according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that, the elements corresponding to one

and the same selection criterion forming a group (204<sub>1</sub>, 204<sub>2</sub>, 204<sub>3</sub>, 204<sub>4</sub>, 204<sub>5</sub>, 204<sub>6</sub>), images associated with elements belonging to one and the same group are displayed in a group.

8. Process according to one of the preceding  
5 claims, characterized in that one selects an image and/or a group from which are chosen images displayed by considering at least one of the following criteria: a frequency of access, a date of storage, a file size, technical parameters specific to the associated images such as a predominance of colour or the  
10 presence of determined reliefs in this image, a theme associated with the element, membership of one and the same semantic group, a similarity relating to the nature and/or to the content of the element, a random decision or a user's preferences.

9. Process according to one of the preceding  
15 claims, characterized in that the multimedia elements relate to video sequences, images, pieces of music and/or texts.

10. Process according to one of the preceding  
claims, characterized in that, a multimedia element relating to a photograph or to a video sequence, the image associated with  
20 this element is generated from this photograph or from this video sequence.

11. Process according to one of the preceding  
claims, characterized in that an element is accessed by generating the display thereof.

25 12. Process according to one of the preceding  
claims, characterized in that the displaying of the images is performed according to a chronological mode or according to a thematic mode.

13. Device (200) for access to multimedia elements  
30 stored by means of digital data, an image (a, b, c, d, e, ..., m, n) being associated with each element so as to access the latter, characterized in that it comprises means for (210),

- displaying a first group of images (b, c, e, f, g; a, j, e, f, g) associated with first elements, and

- controlling, on the basis of one of the images displayed, the displaying of a second group of images (i, e, k, m, n; b, c, e, k, m), associated with second elements, which group is distinct from the first group of images.

5           14. Device according to Claim 13, characterized in that it comprises means for associating with at least one of the images of the second group means for displaying a third group of images, associated with third elements, which group is distinct from the second group of images.

10           15. Device according to Claim 13 or 14, characterized in that it comprises means for automatically displaying a first group of images as soon as means of display of images are activated.

15           16. Device according to Claim 13, 14 or 15, characterized in that it comprises means for displaying means activating the display of a first group of images (b, c, e, f, g; a, j, e, f, g) upon an operation on a multimedia element such as the display thereof, the storage thereof or the transmission thereof.

20           17. Device according to one of Claims 13 to 16, characterized in that it comprises means for displaying images according to a chronological mode or according to a thematic mode.